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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,

STATES RELATIONS SERVICE.

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HOW TEACHERS OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS MAY USE FARMERS' BULLETIN 936, THE CITY AND SUBURBAN VEGETABLE GARDEN.

Range of use.—For the graded schools in cities and large towns throughout the country.¹

Relation to the course of study.—Adapted to class work and related practice in elementary agriculture, school and home gardening, and economic nature study, with abundant correlations for other subjects. Especially helpful in the emergency courses.

Methods of using the bulletin.—The chief aim of the school study of gardening should be to lead pupils to start a garden or to take their parts in making a success of the home gardens. The school work should be centered about the practice in which the pupils will participate and most of the information acquired should be that which will be necessary for success. The school garden is less likely to yield pleasure and profit, and thus more information of value is to be acquired from home gardens or from individual projects on vacant lots.

The teacher should cooperate with club leaders, garden associations, or other organized efforts, as these will help to secure the supervision necessary for the success of many of the projects. In the absence of these the teacher should seek the cooperation of a competent committee which will occasionally inspect the home gardens and give advice where needed. If an organized plan is made for a fall exhibit, the stimulus may be valuable, but the contest feature should be subordinated to the production aim for pleasure and profit.

Since most of the harvesting, marketing, and canning (except for late varieties) comes during the vacation months, the adviser and supervisor are very necessary, and should receive a salary wherever possible. A teacher who is competent makes the best supervisor, but too many incompetent persons give advice about city and suburban gardens.

The school work in gardening.—The teacher should conduct class exercises in gardening, not to find out what the pupil can recite, but to help him to obtain the desired information. These exercises should be supplemented by correlations in reading other bulletins, in computing for all garden problems, in writing letters or in making reports. The woodwork class should make stakes, trellises, seed flats, and crates, or should make a community hotbed for early plants for the home gardens. Tools may be repaired and new tools adjusted by the class at school. Articles needed for the canning, drying, or storage may be demonstrated, and at the time of the exhibit, the pupils should do all of the work which can be intrusted to them.

Class exercises and coordinate practice.—I. Preliminary (late winter): Conduct a systematic inquiry as to gardens of last year and locate all

¹ For other schools use Farmers' Bulletin 934, Home Gardening in the South, or Farmers' Bulletin 937 The Farm Garden in the North.

available space for project gardens. Have each pupil arrange with parents as to the garden he may have and have a diagram made of the plat, showing size, direction, location of buildings, and fences. Learn also the condition of the soil and previous cropping system.

Determine aims of each garden, home supply, market, canning, staples for winter, etc. Have a conference with parents about this. Consult tables for estimate of labor and expense for each plat.

Obtain catalogues from seed firms. Consult planting table in bulletin and fill in the crops on the diagrams. Have pupils make up seed orders and check up on each. Correct the letters before sending.

Make seed flats and start some plants at school. Test seeds for vitality. Use a hotbed, if possible, and if the school starts a vacant lot garden, it is desirable to make a hotbed and cold frames.

Plan in early season for the improvement of the soil. Have new vegetables tried by those who have ample space.

II. Early gardening: Fertilize as recommended and fit the land thoroughly. Many pupils' gardens fail because of neglect in this first chart. Learn from local authorities the modification of dates for planting and then follow the garden plan closely in seeding and transplanting. Consult the bulletin as to rotations, succession of crops, etc. Read and study all bulletins on summer practice before the end of the school term. Visit each garden with the supervisor and see that each garden is thoroughly cultivated.

III. Summer work: (Have each process demonstrated and practiced many times quite early.) Frequency and type of cultivation needed? How and when irrigated? How prevent insects and diseases? How detect them early? How control if they appear? When is each vegetable to be harvested? How best prepared for eating? What will be done with the surplus? Can it be marketed profitably? Would it be better to can or dry it? Which vegetables may be stored and used as needed? What cooperation may be arranged for marketing, for exchanging, for canning, or for drying? Plan for the exhibit at the school in the fall and have each pupil agree as to what he will attempt to do for it.

Materials and assistance.—Other bulletins related to gardening may be had from the U. S. Department of Agriculture at Washington, and in most cases from the agricultural college in the State in which you live. Seed houses and manufacturers of garden tools furnish helpful material and the teacher may collect and arrange useful exhibits as suggested in Farmers' Bulletins 586 and 606. For solving problems in teaching the subject address the Specialist in Agricultural Education, States Relations Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture. Problems in gardening or in supervising should be referred to the club leader and the specialists at the State agricultural college, although any individual is free to ask the Department of Agriculture for further assistance. A limited number of sets of lantern slides are to be loaned to superintendents of schools for transportation cost only.

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